

(b) if so, whether Government have taken any steps so far to investigate the matter; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) to (c) On a reference from the Government, CBI had registered a preliminary enquiry (PE) into the matter relating to import of 15 lakh MTs of Wheat from the Australia during 1998. Consequent on the completion of the PE, CBI has registered a regular case on 11.9.2001.

Problems of rice growers in Karnataka

1245. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is fact that the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh has requested the Central Government to take all precautionary steps to prevent recurrence of the problems faced by the rice growers in the State on account of lack of proper procurement policy of the Food Corporation of India (FCI) during the last Kharif and Rabi seasons;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken/intended to be taken in this regard to protect interests of the paddy farmers in the State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) and (b) Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh meet Union Minister of Food, Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution, and requested to take necessary steps to ensure smooth procurement of rice during the Kharif marketing Season, 2001-2002.

(c) During the Kharif Marketing Season 2000-2001 (October-September), 71.72 lakh MTs of rice was procured in Andhra Pradesh as against 54.98 Lakh MTs during the preceding year. The procurement during the Kharif Marketing

[29 November, 2001]

RAJYA SABHA

Season 2000-01 was the highest in the history of Andhra Pradesh. During the current year, upto 24.11.2001, 1.35 lakh MT of rice (including paddy in terms of rice) has been procured. FCI has also given guarantee for 15 lakh MTs of additional storage space under the 7 years guarantee scheme.

Wheat import scams

1246. SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state: (a) whether it is a fact that investigations into the alleged wheat import scams of 1997-98 when all Government godown were full, have been completed;

(b) if so, the outcome thereof; and

(c) the action taken and being taken against those found involved?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) to (c) After conclusion of the preliminary enquiry No. PE-14(A)/98-DLI into the matter relating to import of 15 lakh MTs of wheat from the Australian Wheat Board contracted in 1997-98, CBI has registered a regular case no. RC 62 (a)/ 2001-DLI on 11.09.2001.

Exemption of FCI from statutory levies

1247. SHRI R. SARATH KUMAR: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether a high level Committee, which formulation a long term foodgrains policy has recommended exemption of Food Corporation of India from paying statutory levies to the State Government;

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto;

(c) whether Government have examined the interim report submitted by Prof. Abhijit Sen on the subject;

(d) if so, the main recommendations made in the report; and

(e) by when a long term foodgrains policy is likely to be finalised?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The recommendation is under examination of Government.